

STRATEGIC RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT FOR PEACEBUILDING

BY

CHAPLAIN (LIEUTENANT COLONEL) IRA C. HOUCK III
United States Army

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U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050

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STRATEGIC RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT FOR PEACEBUILDING

by

Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Ira C. Houck III
United States Army

Topic Approved By:
Marc Gopin, Ph. D.

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

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The U.S. Army Chaplaincy functions in its traditional roles as it exercises professional military religious leadership for the United States Army Family. At the same time the Chaplaincy is expanding its advisory capabilities to meet the needs of the combatant command in full spectrum operations, and is performing new tasks of conflict resolution through key political-religious leader engagements, and religious and conflict analyses. Strategic Religious Engagement is respectful interaction with religion and culture that are operationally relevant to the efforts of peacebuilding in areas of persistent conflict. The U.S. Army Chaplaincy can advance positive gestures of reconciliation and address underlying issues of human needs while providing religious analysis to anticipate, avoid and abate emerging threats to security. The U.S. Army Chaplaincy, exercising an advisory function, is capable of enacting Strategic Religious Engagement in full spectrum operations to the end of contributing and supporting to a just and sustainable peace in a safe and secure environment.

STRATEGIC RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT FOR PEACEBUILDING

Strategic Religious Engagement (SRE) is a pathway to conflict transformation with post-conflict antecedents and contemporary uses. SRE is one of the combatant command's peacebuilding processes for full spectrum operations utilized by the U.S. Army Chaplaincy to attract transformative processes of conflict resolution through meetings with political-religious leaders as a way to recognize the interests and essential human needs of groups in conflict.¹ SRE contributes to the instruments of strategic power: diplomatic power through meetings with local and national political-religious leaders; and informational power through operationally relevant religious assessments and conflict analyses. Conceived as conflict resolution strategy and aimed at peacebuilding, SRE is both complex and challenging.

This essay examines SRE in four parts. The first part defines SRE and links it to full spectrum operations. The second part of this essay describes three dimensions of SRE: *reaching out*, *reaching across*, and *reaching back*. These three dimensions constitute an environment of collaboration, communication, collegiality and coordination that contribute to the transformation of conflict. The third part of this essay illustrates that SRE is a demonstration of compassion and recognition of essential human need in the aftermath of war. SRE is consistent with the historic practice of the U.S. Army Chaplaincy's peacemaking and peacebuilding capabilities. The final part of this essay suggests recommendations for SRE use in support of the Army's future operations.

Part One: Define Strategic Religious Engagement (SRE)

Part one of this essay begins with a short discussion of why religious engagement is described as *strategic*, and then moves into a definition of key terms to help explain the concept of SRE for full spectrum operations. Strategy is “the orchestration of all the instruments of power (political/diplomatic, economic, military, and informational) to achieve the political objectives of the nation in cooperation or in competition with other actors pursuing their own objectives.”² Why is the word *strategic* used in connection with political-religious leadership meetings and why is a *civil support task*, a meeting with a political-religious leader, considered to be strategic?³ These are important questions and five statements address the question of why strategy pertains to an understanding of the varied roles for religion in a conflict situation.

First, religious engagement is strategic when it is employed in connection with political, diplomatic and military power. Religion impacts the strategic environment. The combatant command is better served through increased awareness and recognition of how religion effects the strategic environment. This includes religious beliefs of influential leaders; the belief structures that underlie cultural views; and the impact of religious organizations. The *2002 National Security Strategy* provided evidence of a new willingness to include these issues at the broad policy level.⁴ In the *2006 National Security Strategy*, religious issues continue to emerge: issues regarding religious leaders, religious organizations, institutions and communities that mobilize religion to sanction violence.⁵ Yet these same leaders may draw on religion to resolve conflicts or

invoke religion to provide humanitarian and development aid. Religious fluency is a contributing element of conflict transformation and when incorporated by military strategists to address the drivers of conflict it proves to be effective.⁶ SRE provides the combatant command with additional peacebuilding strategic capabilities.⁷

Secondly, the U.S. Army is becoming more aware of religion's strategic significance in conflict situations as it continues to be effective in addressing international conflicts in which religion plays a role. When the U.S. Army engages with religion in conflict settings like Iraq, the combatant command looks for expertise, resources and assets to find an effective way to address the *drivers of conflict*.⁸ Among the various military assets available to the combatant command for engagement with religion and culture in a conflict situation are the U.S. Army Chaplaincy, Civil Affairs, Human Terrain System, Special Operations, Information Operations and other agencies in the joint environment.

Thirdly, strategy involves maneuvering assets and resources into position prior to the commencement of full spectrum operations. Considering strategy as an employment of assets and resources, the Chaplaincy may be employed by Army Command as an instrument of diplomatic power to prevent conflict, mediate conflict resolution and oversee conflict transformative processes such as peace agreements between political-religious leaders. To develop and augment requisite skills, the U.S. military Chaplaincies are training for cross-cultural negotiations, interreligious dialogue and conflict resolution.⁹

One of the strategic tasks in full spectrum operations involves continuous interaction with civil authorities.¹⁰ As the Government of Iraq, for example, identifies its current civil leadership with religious leadership, the centrality of religion in this situation and the influence of political-religious leadership require the United States Government to change its approach to religion.¹¹ The U.S. Army is increasingly developing doctrine and training to prepare for meetings with religious leaders and communities in full spectrum operations.¹²

Fourthly, SRE is defined as an over-arching, three dimensional concept conceived as interaction in highly dynamic and complex systems of religion across the *full spectrum of conflict* within the strategic environment.¹³ The Army Chaplaincy conducts SRE as a niche capability that attracts conflict resolution and transformative processes of peacebuilding through key political-religious leader liaisons, but also transcends those liaisons by a nuanced analysis of and strategic engagement with the full range of actors in religious communities, and with their motivations, their goals, and their values. The expanded range of actors includes minority religious groups as well as institutionally affiliated religious actors, lay and clerical human rights advocates, development and relief workers, missionaries, denominational structures, and international and multi-religious bodies.¹⁴

Finally, SRE encompasses categories of religion that play a role in a conflict situation. A *category of religion* is defined as an aspect of a religious/spiritual system of belief and practice that gives meaning and purpose to people's lives.¹⁵ Not all religious categories appear in all religions of the world.

The U.S. Army Chaplaincy determined that ten categories are relevant and applicable to a particular operational environment to which the Army is deployed. These religious categories include: holy days, rituals and customs; sites and shrines; primary values; leadership; religious tolerance and intensity; relationship to society; organization; doctrine and myths, history and background; and the references or sources.¹⁶ Strategic planners determine which religious categories are operationally relevant, then they assess how the populace identifies with and interprets each category.

Strategic planners assess operationally relevant categories of the religion in a conflict situation: political-religious leadership; religious hermeneutical processes; sacred texts; religious symbols; geographic areas set aside and designated for religious purposes, pilgrimages, and prayers; religious centers of learning and training; and, religious buildings and structures identified with and representative of a religion and a culture.¹⁷ The assessments contribute to knowledge of how religion impacts and shapes the strategic environment.¹⁸

The term *peacebuilding* is a defining component of SRE. Peacebuilding focuses on reframing attitudes that lead to violence. Peacebuilding is directed toward influencing and transforming the attitudes of individuals, groups, nation states and environmental structures that perpetuate violent conflict.¹⁹ In the aftermath of war, peacebuilding requires collective security and cooperation among all parties, economic resource cooperation and development, as well as monitoring agencies and commissions to include cultural exchanges and continuing peace initiatives.

Peacebuilding is defined by the United Nations as “Rebuilding the institutions and infrastructures of nations torn by civil war and strife; and building bonds of peaceful mutual benefit among nations formerly at war...and to address the deepest causes of conflict: economic despair, social injustice and political oppression.”²⁰ In this sense, peacebuilding is a long-term process of reconstructing physical and environmental structures after violent conflict slows down or comes to a halt. Peacebuilding is a phase in the peace process that takes place after peacekeeping and peacemaking.²¹ Peacebuilding depends on the participation and involvement of all parties associated with the conflict situation, particularly minorities and others who may not have representation or voice in the process. Peacebuilders practice nonviolent conflict resolution processes that draw from religious traditions.²²

In peacebuilding efforts the U.S. Army Chaplaincy does not serve as political diplomats; that task is best done by others more qualified. Still, the Chaplaincy is uniquely capable of dealing with those political-religious leaders who exercise political, religious and persuasive power, and who can deter the inclination to mobilize adherents for violence. The Chaplaincy, qua religious leadership, appeals to the basic values of a culture shaped by religious virtues of non-violence. The Chaplaincy identifies with religious virtues and values of another culture to pursue peaceful struggles with political-religious leaders.²³ Such an approach to violent conflict does not work in all situations, but it has shown progress, for example, in Iraq. In “persistent conflict” and across the full

spectrum of conflict, peacebuilding is identified with what the U.S. Army calls stability operations.²⁴

Stability operations are military operations which take place in the aftermath of war.²⁵ For the U.S. Army, the definition of stability operations includes all operations from key leader liaisons, humanitarian actions, and noncombatant evacuations to Civil Military Operations, and humanitarian assistance projects.²⁶ Stability operations like peacebuilding are about transforming conflict by seeking and sustaining processes of change that not only rebuild physical structures but also address hidden invisible structures of social oppression, the drivers of conflict, or the root issues that lead to conflict.²⁷

Stability operations, like peacebuilding, encourage political-religious commitment to the process of conflict transformation. An objective of Strategic Religious Engagement is to establish trust between at least two contending parties by harnessing the positive power of religion. Religious leaders play a significant role in helping to reframe perceptions, in shaping a group's response to threats, and in preventing attacks aimed at destabilizing a situation. The Chaplaincy is present in stability operations when conflict situations arise to analyze perspectives, to focus on moral issues, to ensure a mutual address of essential human needs, and to sincerely participate in conflict transformation efforts with other religious leaders. The transformation of conflict in stability operations depends on many things, but collaboration and communication with all parties involved in the conflict is essential. *The whole government approach* is an approach that integrates the collaborative efforts of the U.S. Government to

ensure that the various capabilities and activities focus on achieving specific conflict transformation goals in cooperation with host-nation and international partners.²⁸

The experience of military leaders in Iraq indicates that it is possible to achieve strategic objectives by developing a comprehensive approach to confront the insurgency and stabilize a conflict situation. In an effort to use all the resources available, the combatant command employed senior Army Chaplains to promote, organize and conduct respectful and mutual engagements with political-religious leaders in Iraq.²⁹ Such religious engagements contributed to peacebuilding and the struggle for political change in support of the Government of Iraq. These engagements with key political-religious leaders were significant; the Religious Leader Liaison worked in concert with a wide range of peacebuilding efforts performed by a variety of agencies.

Transforming a violent situation into a more peaceful situation relies on the employment of all instruments of power: diplomatic power in the form of Tribal Councils, political-religious leader liaisons; military power in the form of Soldiers and equipment; political power through efforts of reconciliation and international relations with neighboring countries; and economic power in the form of open markets, job programs, and a safer and more secure environment. The point emphasized here is that conflict transformation included engagements with political-religious leaders from the tactical to the strategic levels of leadership.

Part Two: Describe Three Dimensions of SRE

SRE is conceived as a three dimensional concept. *Reaching out*, *reaching across* and *reaching back* are descriptive dynamics of SRE. The first dimension of SRE is *reaching out* to the “other” in conflict situations to sustain or reestablish a safe and secure environment for peace building. *Reaching out* in *respectful engagement* is the attitude to emphasize when engaging with the *other*.³⁰ President Obama spoke of “mutual interest and mutual respect” with political-religious leaders in his 2009 inaugural address.³¹ *Reaching out* in respectful, mutual engagement is characterized by humility and compassion for the *other*. The *other* in the context of military strategy in Iraq is the political-religious leadership in Iraq.

An essential category of SRE is the Religious Leader Liaison. As defined in the Department of Army *Operations*, “Leader Engagement is a commander’s function to accomplish a specific effect. ‘Key Leader Engagement’ in operational doctrine is a subset of Leader Engagement.”³² As described in the Chief of Chaplain’s Policy Statement, *Religious Leader Liaison* refers to a chaplain and the function he or she can perform for the commander. According to the Policy Statement, “Religious Leader Liaison is not limited to dialogue with local clergy. It includes directed interaction with Non-governmental Organizations or other actors the commander may designate as well as staff input of religious analysis to any bureau, board, center, cell and working group.”³³ Religious Leader Liaison is understood to be a function of the Chaplaincy’s advisory role to the unit command. As Religious Leader Liaison, the Chaplaincy is rediscovering

functions of its traditional role as a peacebuilder in the aftermath of war. More will be said about this rediscovery later in the essay.

Religious Leader Liaison in Iraq is oriented toward the moderate cleric and political-religious leader while simultaneously reaching out to personally enlist radical and militant religious leaders. Despite this broad orientation, such a strategy does not tolerate violence or intimidating gestures. Extreme political ideologists motivated by self-interest try to influence the populace through a strategy of terror to demonstrate resolve or to further a political ideology, often at the expense of the populace. The U.S. Army discovered that it can counter extremist influences through a comprehensive approach, what the Army calls “the strategic, integrated, whole government, approach.”³⁴ A comprehensive approach to conflict situations in Iraq includes Religious Leader Liaison, *reaching out* to the key political religious leader.

A second dimension of Strategic Religious Engagement is *reaching across* and is directed to others in the Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) environment, or the strategic environment. This effort is to ensure collaboration and communication to sustain a unity of effort, in an attempt to avoid confusion and a duplication of efforts. Unity builds strength. *Reaching across* to others in the JIIM environment is a kind of *military engagement*, which is defined as “the routine contact and interaction between individuals of the Armed Forces of the United States and those of another nation’s armed forces or foreign civilian authorities to build trust and confidence, share information, coordinate mutual activities, and maintain influence.”³⁵ *Reaching across* to the

chaplaincies of allied and multi-national forces builds cooperation, collaboration and communication, which is another objective of the Strategy of Religious Engagement. SRE relies on communication, coordination, and collaboration with the commander's staff. *Reaching across* to partners in the coalition and to others in the strategic environment, and staying connected with the commander's battle staff builds a network of support.

A third dimension of SRE is *reaching back*. In this discussion of the third dimension, *reaching back*, special consideration is given to the Non-Commissioned Officer chaplain assistant who monitors the effectiveness of meetings with leaders. The U.S. Army Chaplaincy relies on the Non-Commissioned Officer chaplain assistant to help set conditions and monitors effects of SRE.

The reaching back dimension has two distinctive aspects. The first aspect of *reaching back* is acquiring or obtaining information on religious factors relevant to the operation. The Human Terrain System at Fort Leavenworth is a model of reach back capability. The Human Terrain System provides consistent, current, operationally relevant information for commanders.³⁶ Knowledge of the *other* is a powerful tool. James Madison stressed the importance of knowledge in strategy when he wrote, "Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; and a people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves with the power knowledge gives."³⁷ Operationally relevant information is the objective of reaching back.

A nuanced analysis of a conflict situation in which religion plays a part becomes a valuable tool for the command. The Chaplaincy has a capability to perform the religious area and religious impact analyses which provide applicable information. The dimension of *reaching back* describes a broad spectrum of activities designed to manage, exchange and create or enhance intellectual assets of the organization. By *reaching back* the Chaplaincy can draw from a wealth of pertinent knowledge. An example is the Center for Army Lessons Learned.³⁸ Every religious engagement can be recorded in a catalogue of lessons learned so that mistakes can be avoided and successes can be replicated. The value of a lesson learned is its application to refine future practice.

Collaborative tools are essential to functionaries engaged in analytical processes across the *full spectrum of operations*.³⁹ Technology is available to the Chaplaincy for collaboration and information exchange. The technology in the *reach back* dimension will become increasingly important.⁴⁰ As the Chaplaincy communicates, collaborates and coordinates with all functionaries in the strategic environment and utilizes collaborative tools for strategic purposes, it will develop greater capacity to gather, organize, store and make accessible relevant knowledge about an engagement. Readily accessible information can be available by *reaching back* to the resource repositories, such as the Center for Army Lessons Learned, the Human Terrain System, accessible libraries and other Army Knowledge On-line agencies.⁴¹

The second distinctive aspect of the *reach back* dimension pertains to the communication with endorsing agents and supportive religious groups that recruit and recommend civilian religious leaders for military service in the U.S. Army Guard, Reserve and Active Duty Chaplaincy. *Reaching back* for the support of endorsing agents is essential to provide clergy from various religious traditions in the United States to serve in the U.S. Army Chaplaincy. The recruitment of qualified clergy to serve as chaplains who can perform SRE is a crucial objective in the *reach back* dimension. The Office of the Chief of Chaplains must *reach back* to retain good relationships with endorsing agents and continue to communicate the Chaplaincy's Strategic Campaign Plan, philosophy and objectives. The Chaplaincy depends on the support of endorsing agents to provide capable religious leaders who are willing to work with others across different religious traditions. *Reaching back* to maintain support from religious groups is essential to the spiritual welfare of the Army Family and to SRE.

The military commander employs *synchronized action*, informed by a thorough understanding of all dimensions of the operational environment.⁴² The Chaplaincy will operate in all dimensions of SRE to coordinate peacebuilding methods and exercise collaborative networks. Knowledge and expertise in *reaching out*, *reaching across*, and *reaching back* contribute to the transformation of conflict.

It is argued here that the Chaplaincy transcends Religious Leader Liaison by a nuanced analysis of and strategic engagement with the full range of actors in religious communities, and their motivations, their goals, and their values.

Analysis and engagement with the expanded range of actors, including minority religious groups as well as institutionally affiliated religious actors, lay and clerical human rights advocates, development and relief workers, missionaries, denominational structures, ad hoc commissions and delegations, strengthen the SRE contribution to stability.

Considering the “Nested Theory of Conflict” of theorist Marie Dugan, all forces impacting a situation ought to be considered and situations ought to be examined in increments.⁴³ Dugan describes conflicts in terms of “nested foci.”⁴⁴ Conceived as four nests, ovals or layers of conflict, Dugan posits: (1) the immediate conflict issue that sparks the initial fire of contention, (2) the relationships that surround the conflict issue, (3) the subsystem and the local structural issues of injustice, or (4) the system and the larger structural issues of injustice. Dugan views these levels of response as a series of nested ovals. Relationships are embedded within local institutions or organizations, which is often called “sub-systems, and larger institutions.”⁴⁵ For peacebuilding to be comprehensive, it needs to look at how it affects each of these levels of response: the issue, relationship, sub-system, and system. For peacebuilding to be strategic, it can focus on one particular depth of issue and try to maximize change at that level while also trying to affect change at other levels.⁴⁶

Peacebuilding efforts that are solely focused on the issue at hand may miss larger structural problems that contribute to persistent conflict. The benefits of SRE gained through liaison with key religious leaders are secured by reaching out, reaching across and reaching back.

Part Three: SRE as Historic Practice of the U.S. Army Chaplaincy

In contemporary settings of conflict, chaplains are contacting local religious leaders to build bridges of mutual understanding that foster a more secure environment for mission accomplishment between the local population and American forces.⁴⁷ This is not a new initiative. In the aftermath of war in 1945 the U.S. Army Chaplaincy became intimately engaged with the spiritual needs of the civilian populace of Europe and Japan, and later Korea.

The end of World War II marked the beginning of a new kind of conflict. The struggle to reconcile former enemies and rebuild ruined civilizations in Europe and Japan began with the end of years of war. The efforts of the Army Chaplaincy would contribute to stabilization in both countries. The U.S. Army Chaplaincy engaged the spiritual needs of disparate people, prisoners of war, displaced families and survivors of nuclear devastation, concentration camps and ruined cities. The Chaplaincy's efforts did not go unheeded even among the prisoners of war.⁴⁸ History records many examples of Chaplaincy interaction with Soldiers from friendly and enemy forces.

The Army Chaplaincy worked vigorously in all operating environments to promote peaceful transition in postwar Europe, Japan and Korea. Such examples are worth noting to illustrate that SRE is a historical practice of the U.S. Army Chaplaincy. Although era and context differ, the essence of religious support remains constant in all wars: nurture the living, care for the wounded, and honor the dead. The Army Chaplaincy's non-secular involvement in a postwar conflict emerges from religious and spiritual motivation. Religious

leadership for the Army is described by the Chaplaincy as “courageous in spirit” and “compassionate in service.”⁴⁹ The Chaplaincy exercises spiritual leadership through its presence with displaced civilians while providing moral and ethical leadership to the Army.

The Army Chaplaincy demonstrated the élan of spiritual leadership through the aftermath of war in Europe. Venzke reports that working with the occupation forces in Europe, U.S. Army Chaplains supervised the construction of religious centers in Germany. Army engineers erected simple memorial chapels for all religious groups to use. At one chapel dedication on December 9, 1945 the narrative reads, “This new chapel stands as a living symbol of one of the cornerstones of any new world of lasting peace which we are striving to build here in the heart of war-torn and ravaged Europe.”⁵⁰ Erecting religious centers and memorials to honor the dead was not the only duty of Army Chaplains. Venzke records that Army chaplains made an official survey of the imprisoned clergy at Dachau. The results are later included as part of the War Crimes Board material.⁵¹ Religious leaders in Germany that had not been compliant with Nazi war crimes died in concentration camps.⁵²

The agonies endured from the war in Europe were no more vivid than in the lives of remaining Jews. An Army Chaplain in the 104th Infantry Division conducted Germany's first public Jewish service since 1938 in the remains of Cologne's synagogue on Roon Street a little over a month before the Nazi surrender. The chaplain narrative describes it as “an unforgettable experience of ragged, half-starved Jews, their spirits barely kindled, stood next to their more

fortunate co-religionists from America.”⁵³ All the people cried unashamedly and "were swept up in an immense wave of gratitude that the reign of evil was coming to an end and that even in the land of terror the spirit of the Eternal People would not be quenched forever.”⁵⁴ In August of 1945, General Dwight D. Eisenhower appointed an Army Chaplain, the senior Jewish Chaplain at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, as Consultant on Jewish Problems.

The chaplain paved the way for the establishment of the U.S. governmental, "Office of Jewish Advisor," with a Federal Judge, Simon Rifkind, serving as the first official advisor.⁵⁵ The Office of Jewish Advisor coordinated the various efforts to assist and support Jewish displaced persons from October 1945 to December 1949.⁵⁶ For the most part, the American Soldier, together with the Army chaplain was the first official contact between displaced persons and the liberating force. Besides the burial of the "liberated dead," the U.S. Army Chaplaincy worked daily with American Soldiers to assist the suffering populace in Europe.

The U.S. Army Chaplaincy heard the cries of suffering people left homeless by war. They saw the horror of concentration camps, the burned and bombed cities, orphaned children and destitute families. With compassion for the spiritual needs of displaced people and empowered by Army Command, the Army Chaplaincy acted to organize and coordinate relief efforts.⁵⁷

SRE is a demonstration of compassion in the aftermath of war. As such, SRE is consistent with the historic practice of the U.S. Army Chaplaincy

functioning as peacebuilders in post-conflict situations. Compassionate involvement with local civilian leaders impacted the strategic environment and contributed to conflict transformation in the aftermath of war. Compassion is not oriented toward people as objects to be controlled or merely pitied from a distance. Compassion identifies with the human suffering of others. SRE considers the human dimension of military operations and engages the spiritual needs of humanity amidst the weapons, fear and suffering. Spiritual needs encompass the entire well-being of the human being. Compassion is understood as suffering with and for others. Compassion is a compelling attribute of peacebuilding and those who display compassion demonstrate a deep concern for others, living a “win-win” orientation, with peacemaking, peacebuilding and peace sustaining at its core.

Army chaplains supervised the reopening of synagogues and the repairing of churches. They organized Soldiers to assist with orphanages.⁵⁸ Venzke records that one group of children from Buchenwald was evacuated immediately to Palestine through the work of Army Jewish chaplains.⁵⁹ By the spring of 1946, Army command assigned ten Jewish chaplains specifically to solve the problems of displaced persons. The Army Chaplaincy, in conjunction with U.S. governmental and military command, embraced efforts to work with the German populace to stabilize a chaotic situation in postwar Europe.

Venzke’s scholarship demonstrates that SRE contributes to a stable environment after war. The impact of SRE in the aftermath of war is measured by a number of results. First, a positive connection between displaced Jews in

Germany and the U.S. Army Jewish Chaplains is seen in the narratives of Venzke. Jewish citizens of Europe traumatized by war suddenly became more than just another desperate group affected by war. Jewish chaplains identified themselves with the displaced Jews. Chaplain initiatives contributed to an environment of dignity and respect for all people.

In SRE, recognition of another's trauma aids in the recovery process of the survivors. Strategic Religious Engagement in the context of postwar Europe is defined more by the role of social service than ritual religious service. Supporting the spiritual and religious needs of suffering people includes social service care. SRE in Europe addressed deep-seated wounds created by the holocaust. The loss of social fabric, life, home and dignity by all parties involved in the war had to be acknowledged before reconciliation and healing could begin.

Through SRE with civilian leaders, the U.S. Army Chaplaincy demonstrated a deep commitment to reconciliation by recognizing the lament of people who had lost everything in the war. Recognition of loss becomes instrumental in peacebuilding. U.S. Army Command saw the necessity of incorporating professional military religious leadership to organize the efforts of international relief efforts in postwar Europe. To explore the positive potential of religious or spiritual influences in postwar conflict resolution, U.S. Army Command appointed representatives of its Chaplaincy to play a helpful role in preventing, ameliorating, or resolving conflict situations. The Chaplaincy in its exercise of spiritual leadership, especially with the displaced and homeless people of Europe, was influential in the operational environment to organize relief

efforts and represent the command in the face of human suffering. To a certain extent, U.S. Army Command's concern for civilian suffering was instrumental in developing SRE capabilities in the Chaplaincy.

Secondly, the use of the Army Chaplaincy as liaison to address civilian suffering served as an interim strategic act, and the liaison efforts produced transformative effects. In SRE, the Chaplaincy filled a gap between U.S. governmental leadership and German civilian efforts to stabilize and rebuild a shattered society during a time of chaos. Military leadership recognized the capabilities and spiritual leadership of the U.S. Army Chaplaincy and employed its expertise to help stabilize and rebuild a society torn apart by war.

Finally, SRE ensured religious freedom by addressing the religious needs of displaced persons, establishing designated places to conduct worship for migrating, resettling populations, even rescuing sacred Torahs, while caring for the spiritual needs of suffering people in the aftermath of war. SRE is much more than religious leader liaison. No doubt the historic Chaplaincy was influential in the peacebuilding efforts of postwar Europe. As demonstrated by Army Chaplains in the aftermath of war, SRE tries to prevent the recurrence of violence by addressing root causes and effects of conflict through reconciliation, recognition of loss, institution building, and working toward political as well as social transformation. SRE is complex with results materializing in the long-term. While estimates of Chaplain influence may be subjective, these events indicate peacebuilding was advanced by Chaplain engagement in post war reconstruction.

Part Four: Recommendations for the Future

Strategic Religious Engagement is not something the Chaplaincy does alone. To engage with a religious concern for others means to work with other groups attempting to address human needs. A cooperative core element is required to implement this strategy. It is essential to collaborate, communicate and work together for the common good. No one party, group, or force can carry the burdens alone. War's remedy requires a cooperative effort, a unified effort of military and civilian actors. The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.

The Chaplaincy does not exaggerate the capacities of SRE initiatives or argue that it is the formula to peace in conflict areas. The Chaplaincy contributes to the military engagement with diplomatic and informational capabilities. The military commander is the primary actor in SRE. The commander uses all available means to achieve strategic objectives while he mitigates risk to achieve an end state. SRE is an effective way to engage and influence *centers of gravity*, key political-religious leaders and other spheres of religious influence, non-violently.⁶⁰

SRE emphasizes the constructive effects of *stability tasks*.⁶¹ Military campaigns focus on achieving *decisive effects*.⁶² A notional example of a decisive effect is 'political-religious leaders support United States coalition peacebuilding efforts.' Equally important, the commander and staff are alert to a set of associated undesired effects caused by "uncertainty, change and friction" that could adversely influence a strategic objective.⁶³

Conceived as conflict transformation strategy and aimed at supporting stability operations, SRE requires careful preparation; collaboration with knowledgeable chaplains and others who are familiar with the region and its people; and cultural awareness and politically savvy. How does the Chaplaincy proceed with SRE? Where does such a strategy lead? A few recommendations follow.

First, SRE requires clear objectives and an end-state, but adaptive tactics with flexible policies and procedures. In counterinsurgency, Information Operations guide mission planning, and non-lethal means are the primary method employed for mission accomplishment. It is conflict analysis and religious impact analysis that guide SRE. Honest and broad disagreement remains about chaplains functioning as liaisons with indigenous religious leaders; however, it is clear that these capabilities are supported by the Chief of Chaplains.⁶⁴ The Office of the Chief of Chaplains will continue to identify and develop additional capabilities which it can bring to the commander to help Soldiers maintain their moral compass in combat; advising the commander on the impact of religion on military strategy; serving as the commander's liaison with influential indigenous religious leaders; support to domestic and stability operations; improved capabilities in advising on world religions and cultural awareness. The Chaplaincy will continue to evaluate, develop and field resources which will enable it to utilize the world religions expertise available in the Chaplain Corps; to analyze religious aspects of culture; and to advise the

operational commander of their impact on operations. The Chaplaincy recognizes the growing importance of SRE.

Secondly, the Chaplaincy can have confidence in the strategy. It contributes to peacebuilding efforts that lead to further involvement and deepening of relationships with key political-religious leaders. SRE, as peaceful engagement, is a personal and human action. It requires an understanding of local religious and tribal institutions and their relationship with the secular forms of government in western democracy and proposals held by the national government. SRE incorporates a knowledge and understanding of religious-political sentiments and perceptions through personal involvement with them.

Thirdly, SRE recognizes that religion shapes the strategic environment, but suffering has to be addressed. To engage the political-religious leaders is to engage a religion, a culture, a cultivated and civilized people. Religion in this conflict offers a point of contact, a reference point for people of good will to struggle for peace with justice, to dialogue, interact, form relationships and focus on the benefits of peace without neglecting the dignity and respect for every group and individual. Public sentiment is influenced by a multitude of forces including religious beliefs about the meaning of life, justice, forgiveness, hope and by the persuasive power of political-religious leadership. SRE provides an avenue of approach to negotiate with powerful and influential leaders. Good relations are not good enough, however. Political-religious leadership requires decisive results to address the spiritual needs of the people they represent.

Conclusion

This essay argues that the Army Chaplaincy is expanding its advisory capabilities through Strategic Religious Engagement. The Chaplaincy trained in religious impact analysis, conflict analysis and resolution can help the Combatant Commander across the full spectrum of conflict find a constructive space for religious leadership to address pragmatically essential human needs and take steps toward peacebuilding. As an advisor to Army Command, the Chaplaincy provides niche capabilities through a nuanced analysis of religion impacting the strategic environment by reaching out, reaching across and reaching back to provide relevant information for solutions to conflict when religion plays a part.

The U.S. Army Chaplaincy continues to function in its traditional roles as it exercises professional military religious leadership for the Army Family. At the same time the Chaplaincy can expand its advisory capabilities to meet the needs of the combatant command in asymmetrical conflict, and perform new tasks of conflict resolution with key political-religious leader engagements. This is not an elected course of action chosen by the Chaplaincy but one thrust upon it by the necessities of full spectrum operations. The Army Chaplaincy exercises an advisory function through SRE and shows it is capable of acting as peacebuilders in stability operations contributing to a just and enduring peace in a safe and secure environment.

Endnotes

¹ For background on peacebuilding see Catherine Morris, *What is Peacebuilding? One Definition*, January 2000; available from <http://www.peacemakers.ca/publications/peacebuildingdefinition.html> (accessed November 1, 2008).

² H. Richard Yarger, *Towards a Theory of Strategy: Art Lykke and the Army War College Strategy Model*, no date given; available from <http://dde.carlisle.army.mil/authors/stratpap.htm> (accessed September 15, 2008). In the essay, Henry Eccles describes strategy as "The comprehensive direction of power to control situations and areas in order to attain objectives." Eccles' definition is included in the passage taken from the article written by H. Richard Yarger.

³ A meeting with key leaders and civil authorities is considered to be a civil support task, which is a task within stability operations. For more background on key leader engagements see U.S. Department of the Army, *Operations*, Field Manual 3-0 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, February 2008), 27; available from <http://fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm3-0.pdf> (accessed August 30, 2008).

⁴ Liora Danan and Alice Hunt, *Mixed Blessings: U.S. Government Engagement with Religion in Conflict-Prone Settings* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, August 2007), 14; available from http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/070820_religion.pdf (accessed September 15, 2008).

⁵ George W. Bush, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: The White House, March 16, 2006), 9; available from <http://www.comw.org/qdr/offdocs.html> (accessed September 12, 2008).

⁶ Scottie Lloyd, *Chaplain Contact with Local Religious Leaders: A Strategic Support* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, March 18, 2005), 14; available from <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA432751&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf> (accessed January 15, 2009).

For more background see the noted reports of engagements with religious leaders and military chaplains:

Eliason Brandon, *Awakening Councils in Iraq*, June 21, 2007, http://universityofmilitaryintelligence.us/mi_library/documents/VDP-AwakeningCouncil2LTEliason.do (accessed January 11, 2009).

Center for Army Lessons Learned, (CALL), Fort Leavenworth, KS, No. 08-09, *Leader's Guide: Chaplains in Current Operations*, January 2009; available from <http://call.army.mil/> (accessed January 2, 2009).

Stephen L. Cook, *U.S. Military Chaplains on Ambassador's Country Team* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, March 18, 2005); available from <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/ksil150.pdf> (accessed 4 February 2009), 11–12.

Chaplain (Colonel) Michael Hoyt, Command Chaplain for the Multi-National Force 1, *Interview on Chaplains' Role in the Awakening Councils in Iraq 2006*, with Defense Bloggers Roundtable, June 21, 2007; available from http://www.defenselink.mil/home/blog/docs/Hoyt_Transcript.pdf (accessed February 5, 2009).

William Sean Lee, *Military Chaplains as Peace Builders: Embracing Indigenous Religions in Stability Operations* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University School of Advanced Air and Space Studies,

April 2004); available from <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA425869&LocationU2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf> (accessed 12 January 2009), Summary.

Kenneth L. Sampson, *Engaging Afghanistan—the Mullah Connection* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, May 2, 2006), 1–3.

⁷ Douglas M. Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, ed. *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 3–7.

⁸ The Army uses the term *drivers of conflict* to define sources of instability that “push parties toward open conflict, including religious fanaticism, global competition for resources, climate change, residual territorial claims, ideology, ethnic tension, elitism, greed, and the desire for power.” The *drivers of conflict* emerge as numerous symptoms of crises worldwide.

For background see U.S. Department of the Army, *Stability Operations*, Field Manual 3-07 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, October 2008), 1-10; available from <http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/digitalpublications.asp> (accessed September 15, 2008).

⁹ The Army and Air Force are sending chaplains to George Mason University's Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution for professional military training to enhance and expand analytical and advisory capabilities.

¹⁰ Ibid., 3-7. For background on engagements with religious leaders see U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Religious Support in Joint Operations*, Joint Publication 1-05 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Revision First Draft, 30 October 2008), chapters 2 and 3; available from http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp1_02.pdf (accessed January 26, 2009).

¹¹ Jonathan Fox, “Religion as an Overlooked Element of International Relations,” *International Studies Review* 3, no. 3 (2001): 51.

¹² Danan and Hunt, *Mixed Blessings*, 34.

¹³ The *spectrum of conflict* spans from “stable peace to general war and includes intermediate levels of unstable peace and insurgency.” For background see U.S. Department of the Army, *Operations*, 2-1.

¹⁴ Douglas M. Johnston, *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 24–27.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of the Army, *Religious Support*, Field Manual 1-05 (Washington, DC: U. S. Department of the Army, April 2003), Appendix F; available from http://www.jrtc-polk.army.mil/Garrison/chaplain/References/fm1_05.pdf (accessed August 30, 2008).

¹⁶ Ibid.

See also U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Religious Support in Joint Operations*, Appendix A; available from <http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/digitalpublications.asp> (accessed November 1, 2008). The publication provides a full outline of religious categories relevant to operational and strategic planning.

¹⁷ The chaplain, in collaboration with other staff officers, may provide input to a “Guide to Advising on Religions.” Relevant information on religion is dependent on context and conflict situation; and, may include issues of sect or group religious customs, traditions, organizations,

communities, symbols, facilities, and sensitivities. For more background see U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Religious Support in Joint Operations*, Appendix A.

¹⁸ U.S. Department of the Army, *Religious Factors Analysis*, Graphic Training Aid 41-01-005 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, January 2008).

¹⁹ John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 2008), 19–21.

See also *Caritas International, Peacebuilding: A Caritas Training Manual* (Palazzo San Calisto, Vatican City: Caritas Internationalis, 2002); available from www.caritas.org; and, available from http://crs.org/publications/showpdf.cfm?pdf_id=85 (accessed January, 11 2009). The training manual provides ideas and resources for effective peacebuilding.

²⁰ The United Nations, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-Keeping: Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council*, January 31, 1992, point 15; available from <http://www.un.org/docs/SG/agpeace.html> (accessed November 13, 2008).

²¹ Conflict analysts use terms--*peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding*. The peace process is complex and requires long-term commitments to transform conflict through *peacebuilding*, which is the process of normalizing relations and reconciling differences between all the citizens of the warring factions.

See Dean G. Pruitt and Sung Hee Kim. *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement*, 3rd edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004), 190. Supporting definitions are also available from *Beyond Intractability*; available from http://www.beyondintractability.org/m/multitrack_diplomacy.jsp (accessed September, 30 2008).

²² Marc Gopin, "When the Fighting Stops: Healing Hearts with Spiritual Peacemaking," *Religion and Security: The New Nexus in International Relations*, ed. Robert A. Seiple and Dennis R. Hoover (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 143. See also Marc Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence, and Peacemaking* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 210–213; Marc Gopin, *Holy War, Holy Peace: How Religion Can Bring Peace to the Middle East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1–6; Marc Gopin, "Religion, Violence, and Conflict Resolution." *Peace and Change* 22, no. 1 (January 1997): 1–31.

²³ Raymond Cohen, *Negotiating Across Cultures: International Communication in an Interdependent World*, revised edition (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 9.

²⁴ The Army uses the term *persistent conflict* to underscore "the continuum of conflict and the complexities of war." See U.S. Department of the Army, *Stability Operations*, Forward.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1-10.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ U.S. Department of the Army, *Stability Operations*, 1-10.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1-18 and 1-23. See also Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 99–100.

²⁹ George Adams, *Chaplains as Liaisons with Religious Leaders: Lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace, March 2006), 34; available from <http://www.usip.org/pubs/peaceworks/pwks56.pdf> (accessed September 12, 2008).

³⁰ Dr. Douglas Johnston of the International Center of Religion and Diplomacy in an interview with the author at the office of the Chief of Chaplains and with the Chief of Chaplains, Chaplain (Major General) Douglas L. Carver, Arlington, VA, December 10, 2008. Dr. Johnston emphasized the phrase *respectful engagement*.

³¹ The author witnessed the inauguration address in Washington, DC and heard President Obama say, "To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect." For more background see *The 44th Presidential Inaugural Address*, January 20, 2009; available from <http://www.america.gov/st/usg-english/2009/January/20090120130302abretnuh0.2991602.html> (accessed January 24, 2009).

³² U.S. Department of the Army, *Operations*, 7-8 and 7-12.

³³ Official Memorandum from the Office Chief of Chaplains, Chaplain (Major General) Douglas L. Carver, *Religious Leader Liaison*, Policy Statement #3, Arlington, VA, September 30, 2008; available from <http://www.chapnet.army.mil/> (accessed October 22, 2008).

³⁴ The Army's approach relies on an active and collaborative interagency strategy. For more background see U.S. Department of the Army, *Stability Operations*, 1-11 and 1-17.

³⁵ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *The Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, definition. See also U.S. Department of the Army, *Operations*, 6-8.

³⁶ For more background see *U.S. Army Human Terrain System*, <http://humanterrain.system.army.mil/> (accessed December 23, 2008); and, Human Terrain System, *Human Terrain Team Handbook* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Human Terrain System, September 2008), 7; available from <http://88.80.13.160.nyud.net/leak/human-terrain-handbook-2008.pdf> (accessed March 12, 2009).

³⁷ The quote is taken from James Madison's letter to W.T. Barry, August 4, 1822, reprinted in *1 Founders' Constitution at 690*; available from <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/> (accessed January 1, 2009).

³⁸ The Army considers knowledge management to be a strategy. The envisioned end is to transform the Army into a net-centric, knowledge-based force. Knowledge management is both art and science, a combination of creating, organizing, applying, and transferring knowledge to sharpen situational awareness and ease decision making processes.

See U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Knowledge Management and Information Technology*, Army Regulation 25-1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, December 4, 2008), 1-10; available from http://www.army.mil/usapa/epubs/pdf/r25_1.pdf (accessed January 2, 2009).

See also U.S. Department of the Army, *Knowledge Management Section*, Field Manual 6-01.1, (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, August 29, 2008), 1-3; available from <http://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm6-01-1.pdf> (accessed January 3, 2009). The Field Manual provides statements on the types of knowledge analyzed to provide meaning and value for an operation.

³⁹ The Army uses *full spectrum of operations* to denote the foundations for Army operations conducted outside the United States. See U.S. Department of the Army, *Operations*, 3-1.

⁴⁰ Eric R. Keller, *Religious Support in the Division XXI Heavy Brigade* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, June 1, 2001); available from <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA396505&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf> (accessed 22 January 2009).

⁴¹ For more background see *Human Terrain System Research Reachback Center Products*; available from <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/call/index.asp> (access privileges are available to only U.S. military, Department of Defense and other U.S. government agencies).

⁴² The Army employs *synchronized action*. See U.S. Department of the Army, *Operations*, 3-2.

⁴³ For background see Maire A. Dugan, "A Nested Theory of Conflict." *A Leadership Journal: Women in Leadership - Sharing the Vision*, May 1, 1996, 9-20. Marie Dugan's writings about the broad and deep roots of nested conflict construct a helpful framework for analysis. Dugan's theory contends that resolution is obscured and resurgence likely until conflicts at all levels are addressed. She describes several levels, each nested inside the other: "issue-specific... relational... subsystem...system-level structural conflict." A nested theory of conflict approaches disputes by identifying spheres of conflict that encompass not one but many sources of conflict nested within one another. Dugan asserts that the first step in determining how to resolve conflict is to analyze at which source level it arises.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴⁶ Caritas International, *Peacebuilding*, 94.

⁴⁷ Lloyd, *Chaplain Contact with Local Religious Leaders*, 3.

⁴⁸ According to Venzke, when Italy surrendered in September 1943, the Division Chaplain of the 88th "Blue Devil" Infantry Division in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations, along with four other chaplains, set out to bring a "rebirth of religion" among the 300,000 German prisoners under the command of the 88th Infantry Division. Venzke's classical narrative celebrates how the Army Chaplaincy performed its duty in the contexts of both war and peace.

See Rodger R. Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace, the United States Army Chaplaincy 1945-1975, Volume 5* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Chaplains, 1977).

⁴⁹ The U.S. Army Chaplain Corps uses the phrased words to describe itself in the U.S. Army's *Chaplaincy Strategic Plan 2009-2014*; available from <http://www.chapnet.army.mil/Docs/Documents/Strategic%20Plans/2009-2014.pdf> (accessed March 14, 2009).

⁵⁰ Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace, the United States Army Chaplaincy 1945-1975, Volume 5*, 15.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁵² Ibid., 32. Venzke records that the U.S. Army Chaplaincy made an official survey of the imprisoned clergy at Dachau. The results, later included as part of the War Crimes Board material, indicated there had been 2,448 Christian ministers in the camp but that only 1,100 were still living on the day of the camp's liberations.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 17.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 18.

⁵⁷ The reader is reminded of the Biblical concept of compassion as described in Exodus 3:7, "The LORD said, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering'" (New International Version). It is also noted that the problem of the holocaust raised a series of theodicy questions about violence and religion, which are still being addressed by theologians. See Marc Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence, and Peacemaking*, 117–119.

⁵⁸ Ralph H. Blumenthal, "Jewish Chaplains as Liaison Officers for G-5 with Jewish D.P. Camps," *The Contribution of Chaplains to the Occupation European Command* (Paul J. Maddox, ed., Chief of Chaplains European Command, March 1, 1948), 43.

⁵⁹ Venzke, *Confidence in Battle, Inspiration in Peace, the United States Army Chaplaincy 1945-1975, Volume 5*, 17–18.

⁶⁰ The *center of gravity* is "the source of power that animates moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act." For background see U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*; available from <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/> (accessed October 12, 2008).

⁶¹ U.S. Department of the Army, *Operations*, 2-9.

⁶² Ibid., 1-12; *effects* are "outcomes and they are measured in terms of impacts on populations."

⁶³ Ibid., 1-79 and 2-58.

⁶⁴ In an office interview with the author at the Office of the Chief of Chaplains, Chaplain (Major General) Douglas L. Carver, Arlington, VA, July 17, 2008, emphasized that the primary concern of the Army chaplain is and will remain the religious support of the Army Family and any engagements with local religious leaders is in addition to meeting the religious needs of U.S. military personnel. SRE is a necessary expansion of existing capabilities.